



# The SLO 4-Wheeler



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## Trip Report: Fourth of July Parade

*Written by George W., Editor*  
 On Monday, July Fourth, we started assembling at the donut shop on the north side of Templeton. Those of us who got there early fueled up on doughnuts and caffeine in preparation for the time we would be sitting behind the wheel traveling at almost trail speeds and maybe less. At the appointed time, we went over and got our registration numbers and move the vehicles to the staging area. We started decorating our rigs at the staging spot for our number in the parade



Matt J.s Rig (photo by Karyn J.)

### Fred W.'s Rig (photo by Karyn J.)



(we actually got a shade tree). On the scene were Matt Jackson with his Land Rover, Kenn B. and his squirt gun tot-  
 ing son with their Toyota FJ40 and bubble making Suzuki bed trailer, Fred W. and his son with their blue YJ, Tom and Karen B. and their Toyota Pick Up, Bob O. and his Rock Buggy and myself with my Rubicon. Decoration ranged from flags and bunting to garland and stars. Nice thing about our spot was we got to see everyone ahead of us go by as the furthest back were the first to go.

*(Continued on page 4)*

Newsletter submittals by the weekend after the meeting to George W.

## 2011 SLO 4-Wheelers Officers

### Officers:

President: ..... Eric F.  
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 Adopted Trails and Campgrounds:  
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 Pine Mountain Trail: ..... Mark B.  
 La Panza & Navaho Camp Grounds: ..... Kirk R.  
 Carrizo Plains Land Use ..... Randy P.

# Trip Report: Late May Garcia Ridge Run

by George W., Editor

In the last week of May Eric sent out a message that the Sons of Thunder were going to do a Garcia Ridge run on Saturday May 28th. They were going to leave Santa Maria and other points, hoping to get the Hi Mountain Rd at Lopez about 9:30 AM and then meet at the Hi Mountain Summit whenever they got there. Eric F. and I talked back and forth about both going and choose to meet at the Pozo Ranger station at about the same time or a little later and then mosey up to the Summit and then hit the trail.

Well things didn't go as planned that morning and both Eric and I were running late and we both finally left the Pozo Ranger station at about 11:00 AM. We were surprised when we go to the summit on Hi Mountain Rd, that the Sons of Thunder had just arrived from Arroyo Grande and they had not realized how long the drive up from the ocean side was. There were now several rigs, Eric and I in ours and Sons of Thunder members and some of their friends, Wendy & Jason V., Kylie, A., & Taryn., Dwight & Lynda P., Rob N. and Bob A, and their rigs.

We headed up the trail and quickly found, that shortly after passing the little steps play area, that the trail was over grown again as we all acquire new pen striping on our rigs. We

Eric F. on the small steps (photo by George W.)

pushed on with the sound of branches and leaves on metal panels and stopped a couple of times where there were good views of the Pozo Valley and the coast.

As we went along and then stopped, each time we stopped, my coolant system started perking like a coffee pot, filling the overflow tank. After several minutes, or on starting the engine, the excess coolant in the tank would get sucked back into the radiator. I was a little nervous about continuing, but my temperature gauge wasn't rising so we pushed on.

At one point, where the trail was fairly steep and the ground real loose we hit our first obstacle. Eric got his front differential locked up with a good size rock and the ground was so loose that he wheels just spun trying to back up. We hooked his tow strap to his rear bumper and my front bumper and I slowly pulled him back until he had enough traction to get around the obstacle. The rest of us made it pass the **rocks following Eric's new line.**

When we got to the end of the trail, we looped around and parked to have lunch at the picnic table. Each had brought their own lunch and after a nice friendly chat we mounted back up and headed back down the trail in the other direction.

Things went well for us going the other way, even at

**Bob's rig on the small steps** (photo by George W.)

the loose spot. However there were others on the trail and they were now behind us and they were having trouble at the loose spot as they were stuck without any lockers. We all hung around until the others too were through the loose spot. We mounted back up and again and went to the play area and let the other pass as some of our member prepared to play.

Eric made it up to the top of the steps quite easily. One of the members of the Sons of Thunder, Bob, decided to try it as well and had a lack of traction at the very top. He backed down to a level spot and let more air out of his tires and made it easily on his next attempt.

We continued on our way and we stopped again at the summit to say our good-byes and each head in their respective directions. When Eric and I got down to the ranger station, we aired back up and headed for home.

My cooling system only acted up on the trail, not on the road. Eric was leaning toward the clutch fan being bad and I was thinking thermostat or radiator cap. Its was time for its tune-up any ways so when I took it to the shop, they found that the radiator cap held no pressure at all.

(If there are name inaccuracies in this article, please accept or apologies.)



# 10 Axioms of 4 Wheeling



Four wheeling, like any other activity, has its rules and principles. During my 40-plus years in this sport, I have seen and experienced a lot. The following axioms flow from all the wisdom I have picked up from others I respect. My list is actually longer, but I trimmed it to some of the better ones.

1. Your instincts are wrong off-road, and you have to learn the correct ways. **For example, if you're going down the hill and the vehicle is sliding, the natural tendency is to step on the brakes. That just locks 'em up and you slide more. If it's wet and muddy, you will slide in the direction of off-camber. If you're driving on a shelf road, you'll go right off the edge.** Learn the proper steps to take, and commit those to memory.
2. Clearance and traction are basic tenets for dirt and rocks. You can get these by applying the correct driving technique and by mechanical means. The Technique comes from your driving skills, as well as your ability to read lines and chart the proper course. Mechanical means includes bigger tires and suspension to lift the body up. Traction is gained through better tires, lockers in the axels, and by airing down. Learn to drive without upgrading the vehicle with mechanical aids. You will develop better technical skills and improve your ability to pick lines.
3. 4 Wheeling is a game of inches. Four wheeling by design involves driving **over difficult trails. That's part of the fun.** Even so, we try to minimize the hazards. As you view the trail ahead, pick a route that is most likely to afford traction for all four

wheels. A lot of times moving just a few inches in one direction makes all the difference of keeping traction on all wheels.

4. Momentum and floatation are the basic tenets for soft surfaces like sand and mud. Use steady momentum to carry you through soft surfaces. Too often drivers hit the gas too hard or at the wrong time, and they end up stuck. Airing down produces a larger footprint for

each tire. This spreads the weight over a larger area so you have less weight per square inch. Combined with the proper momentum and driving techniques, this provides the **"floatation" we need for soft surfaces.**

5. **It's a game of pounds (PSI) too. We air down considerably to drive off road. When you're in the 10 -12 psi range, being off by 1 psi can make all the difference when you're going through soft surfaces like sand, mud and snow.** Make sure your pressure is just right.
6. Spinning wheels get you in trouble. If you no longer have forward progress and you start to spin your wheels, several things can happen.
  - **If you're in a situation that's a little off camber, you'll drift.** You can drift into a much more difficult situation.
  - **If you're on soft material, like mud or sand, you'll bury it.**
  - On firm ground the vehicle can literally start jumping up and down placing tremendous destructive forces on the drive train each time the wheels come down.
7. The more remote and more difficult the trail, the more prepared you need to be. For an easy trail near town on a Saturday with your buddies, you might get by without spares. Do the same on the Rubicon and it could be a day out to purchase parts and a day back before you can start your repairs. BTW, consider helicopter insurance from CALSTAR.org next time you do the

Rubicon. And remember the 7 P's - Proper Prior Planning Prevents Pathetically Poor Performance

8. 10 MPH is fast off-road. We are not racing and over 10 MPH is fast. When you are going fast off-road do not hit the small 5" / 6" (or bigger for that matter) rocks embedded in the wash when aired down. You can cut the sidewalls on both tires on the same side before you are able to stop. Avoid them or slow down and ease over.
9. Chaos reigns when someone gets stuck. Everybody has an idea of how to get the driver unstuck - the quicker the better. And everybody tries to help without a plan. That is counter-productive and can be dangerous. Put one person in charge and hold a recovery meeting to plan your strategy. Remember slow is smooth, and smooth is fast.
10. Expect delays on any run. The more vehicles you have, the more likely something is to happen: breakdowns, someone gets stuck or blows a tire bead, riders need bathroom breaks. **Assume your trip won't stay 100% on schedule, so don't get all wigged out** when there is a delay. But groups are not bad. There is safety in numbers.
11. There is an exception to every rule! I couldn't resist adding one more axiom. Sometimes you have to break the rules - like when your life is in danger. Sometimes you break the rule just because - like going alone. The point is there are exceptions but your level of caution needs to go way, way up.

Even though I list 11 axioms here, which are considered self-evident and assumed to be true, the sport of 4-wheeling has in addition dozens, even hundreds of rules designed to make you a better driver and to keep you safe. If you hear of others, and they really strike a chord with you, add them to your list.

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(Continued from page 1)

Finally our turn came and we headed down main street to the first turn where we were told we should go two abreast. When we rounded the corner, we would have been running over toes at two abreast, so we continue single file with one exception; Kenn B. had brought his RC cars as well and started running them up and down the street on either side of the whole group. As we continued down the parade route, the little RC car stole the heart of the little ones packed along the route (maybe next year we should walk and drive our RCs).

We turned onto Crocker and continued south to its end on 8th street passing spectators and friends along the way.

to the teeth, re-



**George W.'s Rig** (photo by George W.)

turned fire with his squirt guns, not sure if they went far enough to find their mark. The hose then hit the RC in the side and knocked it under Kenn's trailer driver side wheel and before Kenn could stop, the car disappeared under the trailer's wheel. Kenn got out and retrieved it and found, although slightly bent up, it still ran, hopped back into his Rig and completed the

last few blocks back to our staging area.

We stopped in a parking lot to remove the decorations from our rigs and gab for several minutes before parting ways. (I'm not sure that anyone actually hung out at the park to see if we won anything.)



**Kenn B.'s other Rig** (photo by Rick E.)

We turned east on 8th and then north on Main. Finally we had some room to maneuver, but no one did. I actually notice that the entire parade was staying on the right side of the centerline. We ran into the main crown at about 6th Street and waived to all of our friends.

Right before the granary, Jim K. from the Santa Margarita group joined us with his old flat fender Jeep. Some folks had egged him on and we're a good natured group, so he was welcomed in between Kenn's Toyota and Bob's Rock Buggy.

Then the battle started. A water hose was being wielded by a spectator at the west side of the right-of-way. She was hitting people who were open to "cool them down". Kenn's son, armed

Kenn B. at the scene of the RC crush (photo by Karyn J.)



# Use a checklist for Every Outing



Every have one of those trips when, after arriving at the campsite and unpacking, you realize you forgot something important? You smack yourself along the side of your head and say, “Jeez. How could I forget that?!!!”

It happens to everyone at some point. **Even to me. That’s why many years ago I started using a checklist.** I have several, but for this column I want to impress upon you the value of developing and using a checklist. One is enough, though it can be rather comprehensive. The benefits of using a checklist are very clear:

**You’ll depart confident that you remembered to pack everything you were supposed to, and your packing goes quicker. A checklist brings order to your packing, so you’re not scrambling around haphazardly.**

## Create Your Checklist

Your checklist need not be fancy. Create a list in Word or Excel, and print it out before each trip. Having the file on your computer allows you to quickly add or change items as needed before or after each trip. That keeps you from having to develop a new list before each trip. Merely open the existing file, make any changes that come to mind, and print it out. **It’s that simple.**

The format is totally up to you. It can be a simple list with checkboxes before the items so you can check off each item. One page will be easier to use, so if need be, create two (or more) columns to accommodate all your items.

Group your items into categories to make it easier to review them. Some suggestions for categories include:

- Vehicle Essentials (oil, tool kit, tow strap, tire repair kit, for example.)
- Camping (tent, sleeping bag, pads, chair, firewood, etc.)
- Reference material (trail books, emergency package, shrub and tree book, as well as paper and pencils.)
- Food and food preparation (stove, grill, gas, cooler, matches, pot holder, or camp box, if most of that is in there.)
- Clothes (for warm and cold weather, toiletries, medicines, etc.)
- Last In (frozen food in freezer, cell phone, lap top, meds, etc.)

You get the picture. I recommend you also have a category titled Miscellaneous. This group includes a hat, extra pair of glasses or readers, extra key, cell phone charger, binoculars and so on.

Some categories could be seasonal. A Winter category, for example, might include snow shovel, snow chains, and other relevant gear.

Don’t have a checklist yet? Start one by visualizing yourself in the situation. Take for example, Camping. Write the heading and list all the items you can think are needed to establish shelter and bedding for a comfortable night. Visualizing pounding in the stakes - put a hammer on the list. Are your tent stakes and poles bundled with the tent? If not, put them on the list.

## Update Your List

Keep in mind that your checklist is an evolving document. During your trip, feel free to write notes in the margin if **you think of items that didn’t come to**



mind initially. Along those lines, if you have room on the page, create a space just for notes. When you see or think of a better item to bring, write it down.

In this area you will also record supplies that need replacing. During the course of your camping trip, you may run out of salt, pepper, coffee, Band-aids, or other basics. Jot a note in the open section of your checklist. That will save you from having to dig through your supply boxes or camp box later to determine what needs replenishing.

After arriving home, pull up the file on your computer and make the necessary changes. Then your checklist is ready to go for the next trip.

## Final Thoughts

The key is to use the checklist. Print it out before each trip, and review it item **by item as you are packing. Don’t gloss over this step because you’ve used the list several times already.** The point is to keep you from forgetting items. **If you don’t pay attention to your list, you’ll forget something. Then you’ll be kicking yourself.**

Another important point is that you **don’t check off an item until it’s in your vehicle.** All too often we see an object (perhaps in the garage) and think, “OK, it’s in.” **We assume we’ll toss that into the vehicle in a moment.** Well, you know what happens? Yep. We forget. Remember: **Nothing gets checked off until it’s in the vehicle.**

Over time a checklist will become as much a part of your supply kit as a **tent and sleeping bag. You’ll become so accustomed to using a checklist that you won’t feel comfortable packing your vehicle without it.** Believe me; a checklist adds tremendous peace of mind to the trip. Develop and use a checklist for your vacations.

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# Keep Your Kids Safe While 4 Wheeling

Four wheeling is and should be a family affair. Getting away from the rat race and enjoying the great outdoors can be some of the best times you and your family experience. Kids of all ages love to get out into the woods and open terrain.

Like any event, four wheeling presents its own set of hazards, especially for children. Kids are naturally curious, but require a bit more supervision **when they're outdoors. Here are some things to think about as you prepare to take your family on that much-needed trip to the outback.**

## Personal safety

One risk is that kids can get lost.

Therefore, every child should have some sort of signaling device. A whistle **is a good place to start. They're small** and can hang around the neck. A mini flashlight is handy, too. Life+Gear® makes a nifty gadget that is a flashlight, whistle and light stick all in one. **It's compact** – about the size of penlight – and made of sturdy plastic. Consider one of those for your child. As soon as a youngster can master it, teach them their name (first and last) and their dad's name. Then work on address and phone number. In this day and age, we have mixed feelings about the advantage of little kids wearing a t-shirt with their name on it vs. the risk of a stranger taking advantage of that knowledge.

Staying hydrated is important. Each child should also have his or her own supply of water. A water bottle is usually enough, but on longer hiking trips consider a larger unit. Camelback® offers some nice storage units.

Institute a buddy system when you arrive at your destination. Emphasize to the kids that they are to stick together at all times. Make sure they know where they may go and not go, and that they keep an eye on each other. Tell them what to do in the event someone gets hurt or they get lost.

Blow the whistle in blasts of three and find the closest adult to tell.

FRS radios are a handy way for the kids to stay in touch with camp. Just **make sure they don't operate on the channel you assign the drivers.** You

**don't want them interfering with your communications while vehicles are in motion.** Pick a channel for the kids, and tell them not to change it.

Their clothing must be appropriate for the area. Only closed-toed shoes (sneakers or boots) should be worn in the wild. There are too many hazards for sandals or flip flops.

Remember to pack warm clothing and jackets. The weather can change **dramatically, and it's often cool at night.** Plus, you never know if a trip will finish on time. Obstacles or even a breakdown can delay your return.

Make sure your first aid kit includes medicines designed for kids - Motrin, Tylenol, epinephrine, an asthma inhaler, and such.

## Driving safety

**I've said this before, but it bears repeating:** All driving rules apply off

road. Everyone must be belted in, with young children in their car seats. **Everyone's hands and legs are kept inside the vehicle.** Because children are especially prone to reaching out, roll up the window on that side of the car.

**In fact, it's a good idea to keep all windows rolled up at least half way.** Driving through thick vegetation can result in branches and other debris – even bugs – flying inside. Plus, the vehicle can catch and bend a branch, which would snap forward if it reaches an open window.

Remember to perform a 360 degree walk-around **whenever you're about to resume your drive.** Kids like to roam around and under vehicles. Remember this simple rule:

## Driver In First And Out Last

Being the first one to enter a vehicle allows the driver to control it if starts to roll. Similarly, if the driver is the **last one out, he'll have the control that the passengers will not. There's an exception to this rule when kids are present.** In that situation the driver should perform a walk-around before hopping behind the wheel.

Keep kids away from the vehicle during any repair or recovery. Young ones **don't appreciate just how dangerous** the winching process is. Have another adult or older child closely supervise

young children during those operations. Remind your children that cars are tools, not toys.

## Additional tips

Here are some additional suggestions **based upon situations I've observed while camping and hiking.**

- - Make sure your tent stakes are **pounded all the way in. It's easy for someone to trip on one and possibly even fall on a tent stake.** Along those lines, consider marking the tie down cords for your rain fly. Because **they're black, they can be difficult to see in low light.** Tie one or two strips of light colored ribbon to each cord.
- - Remind your kids of any environmental hazards that may be present. These include snakes and other critters, cacti and similar plants, water wells, and abandoned mines. Tell them to be careful about reaching into crevices or on top of rocks. A good rule of thumb is to avoid **placing hands or feet where you can't see.**
- - Kids need to eat on schedule. **Sometimes you can't take a break on time, so plan snacks and other meals for the kids.**
- - Challenging portions of the trip can be stressful for you and your children. As you approach a difficult area, ask your children to remain calm so you can concentrate. Explain what is about to happen to lessen the anxiety for everyone. Say to your kids, **"Daddy needs to focus on this. It would help if you would be quiet."**
- - Talk to your kids about the dangers of playing around the campfire even the next day. The coals may still be hot. Supervise them carefully **whenever you're enjoying a campfire.**
- - All gear must be strapped down. If you hit something hard, break hard or – worst case, roll over – the refrigerator or box of tools could crush someone.

Spending time with your family off road creates memories everyone will cherish for a lifetime. Exercise caution, and all your memories will be good ones.

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# Meeting Location Change

By George W., Editor

If you haven't heard already, Player's in Atascadero is now closed.

After some discuss at the July club meeting, we chose to meet at A-Town Deli in Atascadero.

A-Town Deli  
7600 El Camino Real # 5  
Atascadero, CA 93422

(805) 461-8181

Open Weekdays 6am-8pm; Sat 6am-5pm; Sun 7:30am-3pm

Web site:  
<http://www.myatowndeli.com/>

They are located in a strip mall next Coast Hills Credit Union and the first unit in the Mall is Perry's parcel service. For those with Hobbies, it the same strip mall as Central Coast Trains.

The criteria we used to pick them were:

- Menu variety
- Atascadero location (most members live in the north county)
- A room separate form the rest of **the establishment's patrons.**
- Low or no cost (they are not charging for the use of the room, but are assuming that most members will grab something to eat while at the meeting)
- A large enough room to handle the club Christmas Party.

While Player's was very good to host us over the years, and we will miss them, we are hoping to find that A-Town Deli is of a similar makeup and will provide the space we need to hold our meetings and socialize.

We look forward to many good meetings in this new location and the new environment that it provides.

In closing, we wish the owners of Player's good luck in their future endeavors and Thank You for the years of support that they have given the club.



SLO 4-Wheelers contributes to and/or is a member club in these organizations. Visit and support -they are working for US!

<http://www.sharetrails.org/>



The United Four Wheel Drive Associations also acts as your voice to keep 4x4 roads and trails open so that we can continue enjoying four wheeling in the great outdoors.

<http://www.ufwda.org/>



A varied group of outdoor recreationists who are extremely active in promoting the positive aspects of vehicular access on public lands and protecting that right.

<http://www.corva.org/>



SLO 4-Wheelers is also a member club in the California Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs (CA4WDC) If your not a member, check it out,

<http://www.cal4wheel.com> or ask Suzy



Advance Adapters Inc.  
4320 Aerotech  
Center Way  
Paso Robles, CA 93446  
Phone:805-238-7000  
(Toll Free:800-350-2223)

<http://www.advanceadapters.com>

# SLO 4 WHEELERS

PO Box 2271  
Atascadero, CA 93423-2271



**We're on the web:**

<http://www.slo4wheelers.org/>

## Upcoming Events / Runs

In addition to this list, keep your eye on the club email list and web site:

<http://www.slo4wheelers.org/>

for last minute events or spur of the moment runs.

August 6th or 7th — After meeting Day Run: To Be Determined at the meeting

August 11-14 — Sierra Trek  
Sierra Trek is the granddaddy of California Association of 4 Wheel Drive Clubs events. It is held in northern California near Truckee. The short wheelbase event goes over the famous Fordyce Trail, which is sure to test even the best drivers and their rigs. There are also moderate runs and an SUV historical tour. more info CAW4DC Sierra Trek 2011 Registration no online, see Sierra Trek page for registration Contact/Trail Boss: OPEN

September 2-4 — High Sierra Poker

Run  
Annual CA4WDC event . The Central District is pleased to sponsor this CA4WDC fund raiser and we hope that more wheelers will make this part of their Labor Day plans. We are experiencing growth in the number of participants and volunteers. Since the Swamp Lake Run is limited to fifty rigs, be sure to sign up early if you are interested in this run. We will have on-site registration, but our hosts, the High Sierra Ranger District of the Sierra National Forest, is very committed to protecting these trails for all to enjoy in the future. Oversized vehicles are not recommended on Swamp Lake Trail. Camping equipment and food required for overnight run. SUV run to Bald Mountain available on Saturday or Sunday. Traction aiding differentials in either front or rear will be required for Swamp Lake Trail. more info CAW4DC High Sierra Poker Run 2011 Registration no

online, see High Sierra Poker Run page for registration Contact/Trail Boss: OPEN

September 7th — SLO 4-Wheelers General Club Meeting— A-Town Deli, Atascadero Wednesday 7:00 PM

September 10th or 11th — After meeting Day Run: To Be Determined at the meeting

October 5th — SLO 4-Wheelers General Club Meeting— A-Town Deli, Atascadero Wednesday 7:00 PM.

October 8th or 9th - After meeting Day Run: To Be Determined at the meeting

If you have any questions or events, local runs, not so local runs you would like to do, coordinate and/or participate in, please contact the SLO-4-Wheelers Events Director.